

February 2011 in Our Catchment

The summer has continued as a gentle season this year, with only the occasional stinker, and random pressure-cooker days. Now that we are into the Indian Summer, the days are shortening, the nights are cooler and the vegetation, rightly, thinks it is autumn. When I went out to the Rossi sites there were plenty of blackberries, and seed-heads on the wild caraway.

Your Results

Many people reported elevated phosphates, but only on the Jerrabomberra at Old Cooma Rd were the readings dramatically high. There is plenty of flow in the waterways, and all kinds of reports of wildlife. The urban ponds in Sullivans Creek are all doing very well, and it is good to be told that there is frog spawn about! The electrical conductivity is climbing back up around Carwoola, but, as that is mineral rather than salt based it is no cause for alarm. Thank you all once again!

Water Bugs

It has been a very good season for Dragonflies. The large green and brown ones, the Emperors, Archtails and Tigers, have been common at any wet spot. The powder blue



Dragonfly chrysalis

Skimmers and bright red or orange Perchers are easy to spot. Every bed of reeds has plenty of chrysalises of numerous kinds. Likewise the damselflies (ringtails, river damsels and more) are very widespread this year. The eye-catching red of the Aurora Bluetail is



Wandering Ringtail damselflies in tandem

fine...until you also see one of the tiny

Pygmy Wisps and wonder if things have shrunk before your eyes! They also play their part in the web of life...not all hunters go unharmed themselves.



The hunter being hunted, a long jawed spider consumes a damsel fly

Dragonflies and damselflies have common names; so too the mayflies, among the fisher folk. So many of the other water bugs don't get much press! But they are truly wonderful to see in action. Maybe it's time a few of the more familiar ones did get some names...should the portly water

boatmen with the big feathery legs be given a name reflecting their shape, their green striped cousins another name and the dapper show-off backswimmers be called 007 bugs?



A water scorpion stalking fat water boatmen

Just at present aquatic macroinvertebrates are in optimum numbers, especially where the rivers and creeks have had a chance to settle down (not the Queanbeyan below Googong!) and can be watched in and on the water. March and April are the usual times for Autumn Macroinvertebrate Surveys. If you would like to give things a try this year, let us know well in advance, and we will loan you a kit and some

identification charts.

Calendar

• 8 th March	Gambusia Meeting	Macarthur House, Lyneham	7:00 pm
• 12 th March	Algal Workshop	National Botanic Gardens	3:30 pm
• 19 th /20 th March	Sampling Weekend		
• 16 th April	QA/QC	Gungahlin Scout Hall	2:00 pm

Stephen Skinner

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